

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0514

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 3627

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL PINS SHUM AR

SUBJECT: ADMIRAL MASSERA SEES TERRORISM AS PART OF WORLD WAR

1. IN A STRONGLY WORDED SPEECH COMMEMORATING NAVY DAY (MAY 15), JUNTA MEMBER AND NAVY COMMANDER ADMIRAL MASSERA STATED THAT THE ORIGIN OF THE TERRORIST MENACE IN ARGENTINA LAY IN A THIRTY YEAR-OLD WORLD WAR AGAINST THE "DESTRUCTIVE GOSPEL OF TOTALITARIANISM," WITH WHICH THE WESTERN WORLD, "INTOXICATED WITH INDIFERENCE," WAS UNABLE TO COPE. "PERHAPS TOO MANY SPURIOUS PACTS, TOO MANY POLITICAL CONCESSIONS IN THE NAME OF A PEACE WHICH NO LONGER EXISTS, HAVE BEEN WEAKENING THE MORAL ENERGY OF ITS IDEAS," HE CONTINUED IN A COLORFUL PASSAGE WHICH GIVES THE FLAVOR OF THE ENTIRE ADDRESS.

2. IN A CONVERSATION, MAY 14, WITH AN EMBOFF, MARINE CORPS COMMANDANT ADMIRAL FRACASSI COVERED MUCH OF THE SAME GROUND, STRESSING THAT THE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES WERE IN A LIFE-OR-DEATH STRUGGLE WITH THE TERRORISTS ("IT'S EITHER THEM OR US") AND DEPLORING THAT THE US DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THIS STRUGGLE WAS PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST CONSPIRACY. FRACASSI ESTIMATED THAT WHILE 90 PERCENT OF THE ERP'S FORCES HAS BEEN WIPED OUT, 40 PERCENT OF THE MONTONERO FORCE REMAINED INTACT. THE THRUST OF FRACASSI'S REMARKS WAS THAT THE INSURGENCY WAS NOWHERE NEAR ITS END AND A MAJOR PART OF THE STRUGGLE STILL LAY AHEAD.

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3. THIRD CORPS COMMANDER GENERAL MENENDEZ ANNOUNCED MAY 11 THAT THE ARMED GROUPS OF THE MONTONEROS AND THE ERP HAVE BEEN TOTALLY WIPED OUT IN THE AREA UNDER THIRD CORPS JURISDICTION AND THAT "ONLY SCATTERED CRIMINALS REMAIN." (THE THIRD CORPS COVERS THE PROVINCES OF MENDOZA, CORDOBA, LA RIOJA, CATAMARCA AND THE NORTHWEST.) THE PRESENT DANGER, ACCORDING TO MENENDEZ,

IS THAT "SUBVERSIVE CRIMINALS WILL SEEK REFUGE AMONG THE PEOPLE. THEY WILL TRY TO INFILTRATE LABOR UNIONS, VARIOUS SOCIAL LEVELS, PARISHES AND CHURCHES TO SUBVERT AND AGITATE THE PEOPLE, SEEKING TO EVENTUALLY OBTAIN THEIR TOTAL SUPPORT." MENENDEZ SAID HE BELIEVES THE PEOPLE WILL NOT SUPPORT THE SUBVERSIVES, BUT WARNED THAT SINCE THE CRIMINAL IS DISGUISED, THE PEOPLE AS WELL AS THE ARMY MUST BE ALERT TO POINT OUT THOSE INDIVIDUALS SO THEY CAN BE PUNISHED.

4. COMMENT: WHILE NOTHING WAS SAID IN EITHER MASSERA'S ADDRESS, MENENDEZ' SPEECH OR THE CONVERSATION WITH FRACASSI THAT WE HAVE NOT HEARD BEFORE, WE BELIEVE THAT THEIR REMARKS ARE INDICATIVE OF THE MOOD IN THE ARMED FORCES AND COULD BE THE HARBINGER OF A PLAN TO ENTER INTO A NEW PHASE IN THE ANTIGUERRILLA CONFLICT OF GOING AFTER THE IDEOLOGUES AND INTELLECTUALS DEEMED TO BE THE INSPIRATION BEHIND THE TERRORIST MOVEMENT (I.E., UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS, HIGHSCHOOL TEACHERS, PRIESTS, ETC.), ABOUT WHICH WE HAVE RECEIVED HINTS FOR SOME TIME. IT SHOULD BE STRESSED THAT WE HAVE NOT HEARD THAT A DECISION OF THIS NATURE HAS BEEN REACHED BY THE JUNTA, BUT MASSERA'S REMARKS COULD BE INTENDED TO PROVIDE THE RATIONALE FOR INDUCING THE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE SUCH A DECISION.
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Message Attributes

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